

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPECIES OF *ASTRALIUM*
FROM NEW BRITAIN.

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(Plate XII.)

The following species was dredged up by one of us in Talili Bay, off the north-east coast of the Gazelle Peninsula, New Britain, in 30-40 fathoms on a shelly floor, in company with species of *Xenophorus*, *Ranella*, *Oniscia*, *Pleurotoma*, *Fusus*, *Nassa*, *Conus*, &c.

The entire material at our disposal consisted of some three dozen specimens, and was obtained in one haul of the trawl. The stages of growth exhibited ranged from young shells about 16 mm. in diameter, inclusive of spines, to adult shells of some 45 mm. in diameter.

This handsome shell is nearest allied to the well-known Japanese species, *A. triumphans*, from which it differs chiefly by a reduction of the peripheral spines in the adult and in the greater number of spines.

Adopting Pilsbry's classification as given in the Manual of Conchology, Vol. X., it should enter the sub-genus *Guildfordia* of Gray.

Description of Species.

ASTRALIUM MONILIFERUM, n.sp.

Shell.—Low, trochiform, imperforate.

Colour.—Light purplish beads on a ground of old gold, with a metallic lustre; paler below.

Whorls.—Seven, inclusive of the embryonic portion of the shell; the upper whorls convex, the last whorl becoming distinctly concave towards the aperture.

Sculpture.—The first three whorls are comparatively smooth, with oblique wavy lines between shoulder and suture; they are angled at the shoulder by a ridge, which commences as a raised thread and at about the fourth whorl breaks up into beads. As growth proceeds, additional bead-lines are intercalated until they reach the number of 8 or 9 rows* on the last whorl, where the subsutural row is composed of large, somewhat oblique, transversely flattened, and closely appressed beads.

Below the subsutural row, the outer rows are placed closer together, the median ones further apart.

The impressed suture is sinuously wound, the spines of the preceding whorl being absorbed.

Periphery is set about in the adult with ten to twelve short forwardly directed, stout, compressed spines† of a maximum length corresponding to about one-third the width of the last whorl; but at the age of four whorls the periphery is armed with 11 closed tubular spines, as long as the whorl is wide.

Base is flattened, becoming convex towards the lower lip of the aperture; a double row of beads, about 50 in a row, forms the margin of the spiked periphery, within which occurs a wide shallow furrow, normally devoid of beads, but frequently containing one or even two intercalated rows; then three or, exceptionally, four rows of beads encircle a heavy boss of callus, excavated at the centre; proceeding from this boss a stout rib thickens the anterior margin of the lip.

Aperture.—Oblique, ovate, angled, and channelled at periphery; pearly within, and reinforced at the upper angle by a heavy

* Sometimes there is indication of a tenth row.

† Sometimes there are indications of as many as 14 spines. In the adult the peripheral spines may be locally quite suppressed.

buttress of callus. A deep sinus is formed by the projection of a tongue of non-nacreous shell, as shewn in the figures accompanying this paper.

Operculum.—Slightly hollowed out on its external surface, very sharply angled on the distal margin, thick and regularly oval.

Dimensions of adult shell.—Height 26 mm., major diameter 45 mm. (maximum measurement), minor diameter about 39 mm.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE.

In both figures the buttress of callus is shown at the upper angle of the aperture. In Fig. 2 only a portion of the bead-rows have been inserted; this specimen had four rows about the central callus, and a row of very small beads at the bottom of the submarginal furrow (indicated by the dark shading). Finally, in Fig. 2, the non-nacreous tongue at the outer margin of the aperture, mentioned in the text, is indicated by the dotted line dividing it off from the nacreous portion of aperture.